

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven', while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.¹ While men wear pants, women do not while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleys, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

¹ See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be shaved if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral. [593] [594] [164]

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal. [195] [564] [562] [591]

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.' 606

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'. 593 551 195

¹ Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1939, p. 58.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954

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Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

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their children as do their older brothers or sisters. They hardly teach or help the child in its attempts to walk; for instance, if a child trying to walk falls down, the mother is not supposed to show much anxiety for her child's discomfiture; she simply has to say: 'You will grow up and have more of it', but only after spitting on the ground to ward off the effect of the evil spirits. There is no baby talk, and when the child starts to babble, grown-ups usually tease him by examining his capacity to repeat difficult words, but no deliberate teaching takes place.

[788]

[195]

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As to the sleeping posture of infants, there is hardly any stylized way, as the infant is left to sleep on his mother's lap, on another person's lap, or on the ground, without any scheduling or worry about its sleeping hours. Mothers are seen carrying their sleeping infants, either vertically or horizontally, on going from one place to another. On the whole, the sleeping habits of children in Silwa are very similar to those of other peasant societies, where they learn to sleep anywhere and through anything.¹

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Older children and adults can be seen asleep outside the house during the day or the night in seemingly uncomfortable positions or places.

¹ Margaret Mead, 'The Primitive Child', in Murchison, *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Worcester, Mass., 1931, p. 677.

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD
 as the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes
 called, the 'last of the bunch', has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and 865
 is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and 593
 pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of 152
 rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt, 858
 and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for
 its shortcomings.

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous im- 865
 mediately his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he 593
 is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expres- 152
 sing her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him.
 The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for
 the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, [151]
 two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece
 of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy,
 as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have
 ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite,
 temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.¹

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a tradi- 865
 tional cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced 593
 old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something 152
 that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg 755
 fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually
 when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete
 possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while
 he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice
 and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is
 rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body.
 These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby
 is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger
 sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of
 the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is [154]
 a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains
 of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to
 identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play.
 Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up
 when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety
 over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such
 states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the
 mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the
 child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in [154]
 children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet
 for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents.

¹ 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote
 jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling [195]
 from me', meaning 'you are jealous'.

867 In this way the child experiences the processes of kinship, entering gradually widening circles of people with concomitant responsibilities and meanings. About the age of seven, for instance, kinship sentiment means running errands for close relatives, borrowing things, helping in carrying presents and gifts for them, and so forth. A child runs errands for his paternal and maternal uncles and grandfathers whether they live with the father or not, whether they are on good terms or not. Beyond these categories of kinship, the child is not compelled to run errands for other relatives who are not in harmony with his parents, on pain of punishment. Through the disciplinary powers of the uncle and the parent's family in general, the child finds himself more drawn towards his mother's people whom he usually goes to visit with his mother, because, as mentioned earlier, he finds them less censorious than paternal relatives. These visits to the maternal relatives are more frequent in the case of adolescent boys who can enjoy a relaxing and more genial relationship in their leisure time at night. As they grow older, kinship for boys and girls means help and assistance on ceremonial events of the extended family and the clan.

[603] It is significant to notice that children use only eight terms of address: [604] father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, paternal and maternal uncle and aunt. The last four categories of uncle and aunt are only used when those addressed are married; otherwise they are addressed merely by their [601] first names. In Silwa, unlike many other rural areas in the province of Kena, boys and girls tend, on the whole, to drop these four categories of kinship address after their marriage and usually call their uncles and aunts by their first names. It seems that after marriage boys and girls attain a certain amount of social independence, and thus they do not address uncles and aunts by kinship titles in the same way as they do not address the latter if they are not married, or if the age difference is slight. The recognition of blood relation, however, is usually used as a test for young children by their elders: one might hear an elder questioning a younger, "Who is your uncle? Who is your cousin? Where do they live? Whom do you prefer?" and so on. The adolescents have a few puzzles depending on kinship terms, and division of inheritance, the solution of which lies in the understanding of a linguistic twist, or a pun.¹

[585] [601] [524]

¹ See Appendix VII for boys' riddles.

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

571 and reciprocal obligations counterbalancing the competitive tendencies within the community.¹

156 The vulnerability to tension and friction not only characterizes the constituent social groupings, but obtains in the realm of the interpersonal relationships. Throughout this work reference has been made to attitudes of reserve, constriction, and suspicion prevailing in personal relations.

[505] Hearty laughter is rare, and it usually occurs amongst adults in their sarcastic allusions to others, and in belittling their esteem, while apparently seeming to praise them. Suspicion of the evil intentions of others is institutionalized in the evil eye, seeing potential danger in practically everybody. The small family guards its private affairs with great caution, especially its misfortunes, for fear that others may exult or gloat at their expense, or find some way of attacking their moral integrity. The almost morbid fear of shame, the excessive touchiness, the frequent resort to the use of oaths and swearing, the exaggerated expressions of language, and the scrupulous attitude towards food, are all symptoms of a type of personal relationships which could not legitimately be described as intimate and smooth.² The impressions I received from those with whom I came in contact during my field work was that the villagers mutually describe each other as greedy, envious, and malicious and, as they usually put it, 'people would distribute your property while you are alive . . .'

Such character traits cannot be taken, as some psycho-analysts would maintain that they could, as indications of neurotic personalities. They are specific adjustments of individuals, and could be attributed to hard realities of economic life, to historical forces of oppression (which perhaps have made the fellah regard authority, for example, with suspicion) and to certain affective energies resulting from child-rearing practices.

Such character traits, and a climate of uneasiness and tension in the interpersonal relationships, have also been reported among the Navaho Indians and the Tepoztlanians.³

In this research the writer has become more than ever convinced of the great value derived from the study of 'personality' in both its social and psychological dimensions. Social norms, value systems, religious beliefs, and status, determine directly and appreciably the social behaviour of the individual and are amongst the most stabilizing factors of personality.⁴

¹ This interpretation is based on M. Fortes' 'Ritual Festivals and Social Cohesion in the Hinterland of the Gold Coast', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1936, p. 604.

² With regard to the exaggerated use of language E. Shouby says: 'Arabs are forced to over-assert and exaggerate in almost all types of communication, as otherwise they stand a good chance of being gravely misunderstood. If an Arab says exactly what he means without the expected exaggeration, other Arabs may still think that he means the opposite.' See his article 'Influence of Arabic Language on Arab Psychology', in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. V, Summer, 1951, pp. 284-300.

³ Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village*, Chapter XIV.

⁴ Audrey I. Richards, in a review of 'Personality in Nature, Society and Culture', in *Man*, January 1951.

APPENDIX X

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and asked them to go away. But when the man was out of sight, the two boys returned to resume their fight. When one of them started to cry, the other fled, for if he waited, the father of the former boy would have caught him and struck him.

5. When the older boy found the ball with his brother, he snatched it from him; the younger boy started to cry. When the mother asked the older boy to give it back to his brother, he did. But when the mother went out, the older boy took the ball again and ran outside the house with it, looking proud and happy. The other boys asked him to show it to them and play together with it. When he returned home his mother spat in his face for taking the ball from his brother. He said that he did not take it, but it was given to him by his brother, who did not want it any more. Then the mother told him that he was a liar and asked him to hand the ball back to his brother.

6. When the two boys talked secretly, one of them warned the other against their enemy. They decided not to talk or sit with him or show him anything they had.

7. He screamed, saying that he felt some people trampling over him, and on asking them who they were, they refused to answer him. Then he shouted to be rescued: 'Oh, the One (Yawahid)' (a way of imploring God when in a state of distress, or when frightened, especially used in the village to summon other people for help, who on hearing such a cry, would immediately go to see what had happened).

8. He prayed for gold, clothes, shoes and socks.

9. He wants to grow up to farm and grow corn and go to Cairo. He also wants to get married. He does not want to become an old man with a bent back who is going to die.

C. Age fourteen:

1. The boy is angry because the other boys do not play with him.
2. He cursed his father and mother and thus made them angry. They thrashed him, and when he cried they sent him outside the house 'for the dogs to eat him'.
3. When the boy broke the jars, he was never sent again to fetch water, and his sister had to do it instead.
4. He interfered between the two boys, gave each a slap on the face and cursed their fathers.
5. The older boy took the ball from his younger brother to play with it himself. The father came and thrashed the older boy and rebuked him for being jealous of his younger brother.
6. He showed the other boy a place where gold was hidden. After collecting the gold, they sold it and with the money bought clothes, cars and bicycles.
7. He was afraid that they might be thieves who would beat him,

/83 cont'd/

- (c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets, must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs.
- (d) Candles and incense (Bukhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10)

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751
[195][212]
[531]755
782The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony:

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
 2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attar", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.
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- (9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292
- (10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295

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787[791]
[314]

- 5 *Rahet tekubbê-trabha*
we-zahferân fi-kmanha.
we-gözha rah eş-ša'id
yegib-liha baskûr hadîd,
tihbiz-bo kahk el-'îd, kahk el-'îd.

539^x
 527
 821

Come out again, O sun, dear sun,
 For 'Ali's and Mohammed's sakes
 And Fatne's, daughter of the Prophet!
 Her dough stands there before her.

- 5 She went to empty out her dust;
 Saffron colored were her sleeves.
 Her goodman has gone to the Ša'id,
 To fetch for her an iron hook,
 That she may bake with it the cakes for the feast,
 the cakes for the feast!

1. Literally: "open yourself"; compare No. 19, l. 2.

6. Upon raising the arm which supports the basket, the sleeve of the yellow, under garment is visible. The outer garments of the peasant women are generally black. [291]

7. Southern Upper Egypt (eš-ša'id, as the region south of Aşyût is called) is often a synonym for a long distance. A similar example in No. 128, l. 1. Aşyût is about as far from Saqqâra as New York is from Washington, or Davenport from London. [195] [484]

88.

Hope Deferred

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The lover awaits impatiently an opportunity to join his sweetheart. He compares himself with a ship, which, although ready to set out, is obliged to lie waiting at anchor. "I have waited for two years, and now I give up hope. Therefore let us depart!" — The song was usually combined with No. 131.

El-lāl, el-lāl, ya hilli!

Ya ma tal el-lāl 'ala hilli!

El-hill ya mā-hu 'asi!

u-siribt el-kās, ya nāsi,

5 *sanatēn wana 'al-barr rāsi.*

niḥdir u-ngurr el-merāsi!

The night, the night, my loved one!

O, how long the night was for me because of my
loved one!

O, how hard is the loved one!

I have drunk the cup (of sorrow) ye people,

5 For two years whilst I lay at anchor by the shore.

Now we are ready, let us weigh anchor!

4. The explanation: "cup of sorrow" is *Mahmūda*.

5. Two years, an expression for a long time, is used also [195] ●
in No. 130, l. 2.

x539
832

At the garden-door

Call: "O Beauty!"

Then a maiden will come out to thee,

A fair one, from the marrib,

5 With the soft neck,

On which the (heavy) pearls lie sunken.

He struck the door with his hand,

And let me hear his song.

Ten of his black slaves

10 Gabbled together.

We entered the garden,

● [195]

Sold and bought

And loaded the camels.

12, 13 are an euphemism.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Upper Egypt

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UPPER EGYPT.

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[512] again repairs to the sacred apartments of those denied to all but himself.

[834] In the feeling of the Moslim the harems are not citadels of jealousy, in which the husband keeps penned up a considerable flock of luxurious indolent beauties. This representation, so current in the land of the Franks, is spurned by the Oriental with indignation. The women's apartments are rather places sacred and inviolable, where the *harim* (singular *hurma*; *harem* is meaningless), that is "the prohibited," the women, the family, and therefore the husband's dearest treasure must be guarded from profane glances and frivolous influences. As above remarked, they are by no means imprisoned, with the exception perhaps of the women of the highest ranks, they are merely kept and brought up, so that [554] they may shut themselves off by their veils both in the home [834] and outside from all strange men; among themselves they enjoy the freest intercourse. Such a harem existed already [191] among the ancient Greeks under the less hostilely regarded name of *gynaikeion*, and even yet the Greek women are not completely emancipated, and are very strictly looked after. Besides, the native Christian women, at least in Upper Egypt, are even more than those of the Moslim "prohibited." Among the ancient Egyptians, however, they were very free, and went unveiled. In consequence of being thus shut up [184] the oriental women have almost come to form a separate caste, whose laws the men have to respect. This caste has its [554] female sheikhs, for which dignity the midwives and bathing women in particular are selected, has its medical art, its songs and music, its fashions, almost its own language indeed. [195] at least so far as expressions are concerned, and unlimited rule over the little children belonging to it. From the round of its meetings even the master of the house is inexorably excluded. Of course, according to the law, the woman is the [834] servant of the man; she has not the right to sit at a common [264] table with her husband; on the street he shyly avoids his [1983] veiled spouse; she is even treated by religion as an object of pollution, contact with which demands a full bath before the believer can again perform his devotions; and when men-